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ELECTRA

IN A

NEW ELECTRIC LIGHT.

An entirely New and Original Extrabaganza,

IN ONE ACT.

BY

FRANCIS TALFOURD, Esq.,

AUTHOR OF

*Atalanta, Pluto and Proserpine, Abon Hassan, Ganem, Macbeth
Travestie, Shylock, Alcestis, the Strong-Minded Woman,
Black-eyed Sue, By Special Appointment, March of
Intellect, Jones the Avenger, Mummion and Gammon,
The Heart-wreck, Rule of Three, &c., &c.*

PART AUTHOR OF

*Sir Rupert the Fearless, La Tarantula, Leo the Terrible, Godiva,
Thetis and Peleus, Spirits in Bond, Princesses in the Tower,
Willow Pattern Plate, &c., &c., &c.*

THOMAS HAILES LACY,

89, STRAND,

(Opposite Southampton Street, Covent Garden Market,)

LONDON.

*First performed at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket,
on Easter Monday, April 25th, 1859.*

The Overture and Incidental Music composed and arranged by Mr. SPILLANE. Scenes 2, 3 & 5, by Mr. O'CONNOR. Scenes 1, 4 and 6, by Mr. G. MORRIS. The last Scene invented and executed by Mr. FREDERICK FENTON. The Costumes (derived from most Authentic Sources) by Mr. BARNETT and Miss CHERRY. The Properties by Mr. FOSTER. The Machinery by Mr. OLIVER WALES. The Piece produced under the Superintendence of Mr. CHIPPENDALE.

THE ARGUMENT.

Agamemnon, having confided the guardianship of his kingdom to Ægisthus during his absence at the siege of Troy, returns to resume his sovereignty. His wife, Clytemnestra, conspires with Ægisthus, for whom she has conceived a passion, and they, lying in wait for the king as he is leaving the bath, barbarously slay him with an axe (an-acc-ident which possibly anticipated for him his Homeric title *Ἀν-αξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων*.) The guilty parties are married, and Ægisthus usurps the throne of Argos, to the exclusion of the rightful heir, Orestes. Electra, however, true to her father's cause, and fearful for the safety of her brother, sends him away privately to the court of his uncle Strophius, king of Phocis, until he shall be of years to avenge their father's death, and claim his rights. Seven years elapse, at the expiration of which, indeed, on the anniversary of the marriage of Ægisthus, the present drama opens. The people are crushed beneath the despotic sway of Ægisthus, who, in his turn, bows in slavish submission to the will of his strong-minded lady, while both combine to render wretched the life of Electra. She, unswerving in her loyalty to her father's cause, is awaiting the expected return of Orestes, who, having spread a report of his own death at a chariot race, the more easily to gain admission to the palace, arrives with his friend Pylades at Mycenæ;—they have provided themselves with a funeral urn, supposed to contain the ashes of Orestes, to give additional probability to their story—they are hospitably received, as the bearers of welcome tidings. Orestes then discloses himself, but is spared the personal infliction of vengeance on the usurpers by the intervention of Nemesis, who contrives that they themselves are made the instruments of their own destruction.

Characters.

| | | |
|---|------------------------------|---|
| ÆGISTHUS (<i>King of Mycenæ, who, if not over-wise, is decidedly a shrew'd one, and who, though the accredited leader of the band, is content to play second fiddle to his Monster Consort</i>) | | Mr. COMPTON. |
| PHILARIO | } (<i>Courtiers</i>) | { Mr. BRAID. Mr. CLARK. |
| LYCUS | | |
| ORESTES (<i>Son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra—the rightful heir, and forlorn hope of the family</i>) | | Miss M. TERNAN. (Her first appearance here.) |
| PYLADES (<i>Son of Strophius, King of Phocis, his fast friend and fellow traveller</i>) | | Miss F. WRIGHT. |
| CHIEF HUNTSMAN | | Mr. MOYSE. |
| HERALD | | Mr. WEATHERSBY. |
| CLYTEMNESTRA (<i>late wife of Agamemnon, married to Ægisthus—so unnatural a mother that she cannot bear her own children: whose conduct, though by no means correct, is that of a very decided lady</i>) | | Mrs. WILKINS. |
| ELECTRA (<i>the strong-minded Daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, who looks forward to the removal of her present Sovereigns as the termination of her present sufferin's</i>)... | | Miss E. WEEKES. |
| CHRYSOTHEMIS (<i>her Cousin—in love with Orestes</i>) | | Miss L. LECLERCQ. |
| NEMESIS (<i>the Spirit of Retributive Justice</i>)... | | Mrs. GRIFFITHS. |
| Courtiers, Lords, Ladies, Attendants, Citizens, Dancing Girls, &c. | | |

Scene—Mycenæ and its Vicinity.

HALL OF AUDIENCE IN THE PALACE.

Congratulatory Offerings on the Anniversary of the Royal Nuptials—The Tyrant and (*sed longo proximus intervallo*) the Husband—Domestic Afflictions—Introduction of the “green-eyed monster,” and its consequences—Departure for the Chase.

A CHAMBER IN THE PALACE.

The Cousins—Mother and Daughter—Recriminations.

SACRED GROVE OF CYPRESS

WITH DISTANT VIEW OF MYCENÆ.

Return of the Wanderer—The Urn—The Love-Test—Brother and Sister—A Noble Sportsman in difficulties.

THE CURTAINED GALLERY.

The Rejected Suitor—The Bargain—Illustrious Visitors.

GREAT SQUARE OF THE CITY

DURING A FETE.

A Classic Divertissement,

Invented and arranged by Mr. LECLERCQ, and supported by Miss LOUISE LECLERCQ, Mr. C. LECLERCQ, and Mr. A. LECLERCQ, Master D. CARROLL, and the Ladies of the Corps de Ballet.

Consisting of Mesdames McLewee, Desborough, Harrison, Henrade, Lewis, Kendall, Russell, Matthews, E. Harrison, Pool, Perry, and Vernon.

Affecting loyalty of a free and grateful people—The Proclamation—The Challenge—The Last Hope.

THE WRESTLING MATCH.

ANTE CHAMBER IN THE PALACE,

Wherein the hand of Fate sets the puppets dallying.

BANQUET HALL.

The “bitter cups”—The biters bitten.

THE NEMESIS.

An entire change of Ministry, and Dissolution of the House.

RESTORATION of ORESTES,

And his release from the threatened persecutions of the Furies,

SANCTIONED BY A

CONGRESS

OF THE

FOUR GREAT POWERS

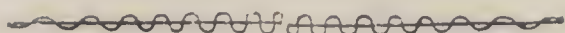
Of Earth, Sea, and Air,—through whose mediation it is humbly hoped, a

LASTING AND NOT DISHONORABLE PIECE

MAY BE

HAPPILY CONCLUDED!

ELECTRA.



SCENE FIRST.—*Hall of Audience in the Palace of Ægisthus
—through the columns at back, a view of the City of Mycenæ.*

ÆGISTHUS discovered seated on his throne, surrounded by
COURTIERS. A PROCESSION appears, L. U. E. from behind
the columns, bearing costly gifts, and enters C. to the
following

Opening Chorus.—Air, "*Le petit Tambour.*"

On this auspicious day, great king,
Our homes we all forsake
Thus freely at your feet to fling
What else your hand would take.
These tributes to your sovereign sway
Vouchsafe, sire, to accept,
For loyalty must give away
What prudence would have kept;
'Tis thus we come to pay our court,
Though traitors' lips may say
The privilege is dearly bought
When there's so much to pay.

COURTIERS. Long live the King!

ÆGIST. With gratitude we take your generous proffers,
Yet, 'ere we can dismiss them to our coffers,
Be sure the precious gifts upon us pressed,
Have touched our *heart* before they reach our *chest*!
'Tis, as 'tis obvious you are all aware,
Both by your presence here, and presents there,
The anniversary of that happy day
When Clytemnestra gave her hand away,
Threw me the reins of government, indeed,
For, from our bridal I've *reigned in her stead.*

PHILAR. We trust no anniversaries, dread sovereign,
Less happy round the royal head are hovering.

ÆGIST. A cordial wish in which we sympathise,
And hope we mayn't see *any worse arise*.
Meantime proclaim a general holiday,
That all may give their loyal feelings play
By general joy in every direction—
In one outburst of unrestrained affection.

PHILAR. Pardon, dread king, you've made a slight mistake
We fear the vulgar rabble scarce partake
The loyal sentiments which animate us
But, rather——

ÆGIST. Yes we know, they rather hate us——

PHILAR. Sire, Agamemnon, it must be confessed, is,
With aching hearts remembered, and Orestes
Whom, if he should return, they swear they'll make
King.

ÆGIST. These aching hearts shall find their head is a-king!

Enter one of CLYTEMNESTRA'S LADIES, L.

LADY. Most gracious sovereign——

ÆGIST. (*starting up angrily*) How now? What means
this insolent intrusion?

LADY. Sire, the queen's
Desirous you'll be good enough to say
If you mean to sit preaching there all day—
Because, when you have nothing else to do
She would be glad to have a word with you.

ÆGIST. (*with change of manner*) The playful dear! how
quaintly she reveals
The jealousy she of our absence feels!
But she's so fond of us we must excuse her,
Besides there's nought in life we can refuse her.

Exit LADY, L.

(*aside*) At least a long experience tells me so,
(*aloud*) All which considered, p'r'aps you'd better go.
(*chorus repeated*—PROCESSION. *goes off*, R. U. E.—
COURTIERS *exeunt*, L. U. E.)

Enter CLYTEMNESTRA, L.

CLYTEM. How fares my gracious lord?

(*with change of manner*) Oh! so they've left you?
I thought you'd eompany—pray what's bereft you
Of common sense, (you'd not too much to start with
Certainly, none you could afford to part with,)
That these last three uights you have left your bed
To indulge in restless wanderings over head?

ÆGIST. Though my arising may to you seem queer,
Your own horizon's anything but clear,
The seeds of revolution, taking root,
Promise to both of us an early *shoot*;
Our cutting off their late king with a hatchet,
Returning from the bath, the rebels snatch at
As cause against us—and exclaim, in wrath,
He got his head shaved when he went to Bath!

CLYTEM. With honeyed words, I have disguised the facts.

ÆGIST. Words won't avail, they'll judge us by our *axe*;
In nightly visious, Agamemnon's shade
Calls on his son for vengeance!

CLYTEM. What! afraid
Of a night phantom?

ÆGIST. I don't mean a pun,
'Tis not the *shade* I fear—it is the *son*!
And there's the daughter too—the girl, Electra—
I always pop on when I least expect her
Laden with curses, every sort and size
For application to my head and eyes;
I wish, unless her language she can soften,
That peerless orphan would appear less often.

CLYTEM. Broken of that, she soon to us will bend herself.

ÆGIST. She may be broken, but will never mend herself;
Besides, her dress is—where got I can't tell,
Apparel quite without a parallel:
Wherein she wanders forth at early morn,
Unkempt, uncinctured, with her stockings torn,
In her hand offerings, in her eye a tear
To imbrue her father's lamen-*table* beer.
Chrysothemis is of another sort,
On politics she never wastes a thought.

CLYTEM. I doubt if she's a thought to waste, unless
It be upon the fashion of her dress.
Thus different ways, each in her duty flags,
One's *over dressed*, the other *done to rags*.

ÆGIST. Chrysothemis I'm sure is worth a dozen
Of her pale, slipshod, sentimental cousin.

CLYTEM. A worthless minx !

(CHRYSOTHEMIS is heard singing without)

ÆGIST. Hark ! here's the dear child coming,
An opera tune most *opera-tunely* humming ;
You called her worthless, and you were not wrong,
Since she is going now for an old song.

*Enter CHRYSOTHEMIS, R U E. down c., a bunch of violets in
her hand, singing and dancing.*

Air, " By the margin of fair Zurich's Waters."

As the morning looked fair in all quarters,
And I knew

A bank where these lie-a-beds lay,
These the fairest of fair Nature's daughters
That on it grew,

I gathered and brought them away !

And you'll own no one bolder can be,

For it don't with my practice agree

To rise at this time of the day ;

Aye, aye, you

May stare—but the duty to pay

I owe you—I owe you—on this happy day,

I owe you—I owe you—drove all sleep away !

(NEMESIS rises invisible behind CLYTEMNESTRA, L. C.,
and speaks through tremulo music)

NEMES. Now is the time, all my resources rallying,
To pull the wires and set these puppets dallying,
Anticipate the tyrant's crime-earned woes,
And hasten matters to their fated close ;
My mission I at once will set about,
True men come by their own when knaves fall out.
Come, Jealousy—obedient to my will,
Thy subtle poison through her veins distil !

(NEMESIS sinks—CLYTEMNESTRA appears inoculated
with a new feeling—she observes ÆGISTHUS and
CHRYSOTHEMIS with distrust)

CLYTEM. (*aside*) What are they saying? I'm inclined to think

A nod accompanied by such a wink

Means something!

ÆGIST. (*receiving the bunch of violets from CHRYSOthemis*)

Are these violets for me?

You're not forgetful of the day I see.

CHRYSO. Oh no, I found them nestling in their beds

This morning, and they raised their modest heads,

Blushing to find that I was up before 'em.

CLYTEM. (*aside*) Violets should blush which violate decorum.

CHRYSO. They are the prettiest that I could gather.

CLYTEM. (*aside*) Ogling! he's old enough to be her father!

(*aloud*) When you've quite done exchanging compliments,

Perhaps you'll explain this matchless impudence!

Flirting before my face.

CHRYSO. (*astonished*) Flirting? oh, aunt——

ÆGIST. I can't imagine——

CLYTEM. No, of course you can't,

You never can——

CHRYSO. Harm, aunt, I ne'er met any——

ÆGIST. And I had no idea——

CLYTEM. You haven't many.

CHRYSO. But I assure you——

CLYTEM. Yes, you'll soon the folly see,

Of such assurance with so little policy.

ÆGIST. (*c., deprecating*) My love.

CLYTEM. Oh don't love me!

ÆGIST. Your word is law,

I promise not to do so any more,

Though I don't yet quite see her crime's immensity.

CLYTEM. Good *evidence* of your own *heavy density*!

And pray where is Electra?

CHRYSO. In her room,

Weaving a chaplet for her father's tomb,

Content, she says, for happier times to wait,

And bend, in mute submission to her fate.

CLYTEM. Bid her *unbend* herself and come here *straight*,

Exit CHRYSOthemis, R.

Such shameless conduct would a saint provoke.

ÆGIST. (*aside*) It won't touch *you* then.

CLYTEM. What?

ÆGIST. I only spoke.

Nothing's occurred to make you thus give *way*.

CLYTEM. That girl shall married be without delay.

Now, as I've family duties to attend to,

We'll this discussion put at once an end to.

You'll join the hunt.

ÆGIST. I hunting go?

CLYTEM. Of course.

I've taken care to order round your horse,

For idle men are always in the way at home.

ÆGIST. I'll be so quiet if you'll let me stay at home.

CLYTEM. You used to like the chase!—I see!—

ÆGIST. The fact is,

Of late, my dear, I've got so out of practice

Since we've been married, long experience teaches

I've never worn, nor am to wear the breeches.

The sound of horns. Enter HUNTSMEN and

RETAINERS through centre arch from L. U. E.

HUNTSMAN. Will't please your majesty to join the sport?

Your thoroughbred is saddled in the court

Champing his bit.

ÆGIST. Oh! that is a decider,

For I am not a bit a *champi'n* rider;

The clouds are threatening too, and seem to say

Our marriage morn will prove a *wettin'* day

From which, excuse me, I'm induced to dread

A *quartan* ague from my thorough *bred*.

CLYTEM. No, go you must; your thoroughbred 'tis clear

Is *needed* to prevent your *loafing* here.

Why, Agamemnon rode! they'll say in scoff,

From him to you was a sad falling off.

ÆGIST. 'Twixt you and me, and probably my steed,

I feel there'll be a *falling off* indeed.

But here goes!

CLYTEM. Shrewdly answered,

ÆGIST. You're too good,

With such a wife the husband must be *shrew'd*.

CLYTEM. The dinner hour for seven o'clock we fix,
So mind you don't return, at least, till six.

Exit, L. 1 E.

ÆGIST. Now since we've got our work cut out before us,
We'll make believe we like it in a chorus.

Song and Chorus—Air, "Kiss me Quick and go, my Honey."

A southerly wind and a cloudy sky
Prolaim a hunting morn,
The deadly breeches I must mount
I've not for seven years worn;
I ventured once to plead excuse,
She kicked me out of bed,
And while I struggled with my boots,
Now what do you think she said?
Oh cut your stick and go, my hubby,
Cut your stick and go;
Don't rub your eyes, but I advise
You cut your stick and go.

And now the royal hunt is up,
I must get up *as-well*,
And clamber up that thoroughbred
From which last time I fell;
I never can forget that day
They picked me up for dead—
And yet to-day I can't say nay,
You all heard what she said.
Then let's be quick and go, my honeys,
Let's be quick and go,
As't must be done, we'll call it fun,
So let's be quick and go.

Chorus repeated and exeunt, R. U. E.

SCENE SECOND.—*A Chamber in the Palace. Music—Air,*
"The Miller of the Dee," very slowly.

Enter ELECTRA, L., her hair dishevelled, her dress torn and disarranged, shoes unsandaled and down at heel.

ELECTRA. Another day has passed, and yet another
Brings with it's light no tidings of my brother.

While poor Electra, wearied of expecting,
By all neglected, and herself neglecting,
Resembles much as classic heroine can
The well-known slip-shod, Good-for-Nothing Nan;
These locks of gold, when servants on me waited,
Used to be carefully *electra-plaited*,
Now all dis-*sheffield* down my shoulders flow—
No friendly comb'll make them *comb-il-faut*;
Where a "deserted auburn" they remain,
I fear not "loveliest even of the *plain*."

Enter CHRYSOTHEMIS, R.

CHRYSO. Oh, aunt's in *such* a temper!

ELECTRA. *In at last?*

She has been out of it for some time past.

CHRYSO. And what *I* can have done I'm sure I'm *not*
aware.

ELECTRA. What matter.

CHRYSO. (*hesitating*) Only—

ELECTRA. (*contemptuously*) True, I had forgot you were
A little sycophant!

CHRYSO. I am, I vow,
More than a little *sick of aunt* just now.

ELECTRA. If then you don't her indignation fear,
Enlist in my cause as a volunteer.

CHRYSO. Join a forlorn hope? No, I thank you dear,
When I my own light company can choose,
Pray, why should I exchange into the *blues*?
No, a fast life for me! "Laugh while you may"
Has ever been my motto.

ELECTRA. Have your way,
But you mistake to call a gay life *fast*,
That must be *slow*, that's without trouble *passed*.

CHRYSO. Here comes my aunt? I'd best retire, since she
Has taken an *ant*-ipathy to me.

ELECTRA. Where's all that courage that you talked about?
Meet her at once, and boldly face it out.

CHRYSO. Meet her? a lighted candle you might as
Well introduce to an escape of gas!
There'll be a blow up if we meet—discreeter
"Twill be to turn myself off, at the *meet-her*! *Exit, R.*

ELECTRA. So, all desert me!

Enter CLYTEMNESTRA, L.

(*coldly to CLYTEMNESTRA*) Pray may I solicit

The cause, ma'am, of this unexpected visit?

CLYTEM. Electra, you've your father much offended;

ELECTRA. About my father, least said soonest mended;

CLYTEM. Oh, you allude to fables long refuted.

ELECTRA. It was, ma'am, to all-you-did I all-u-ded,

CLYTEM. My own child! must I lectured be by her?

ELECTRA. I am Electra! not a lecturer.

CLYTEM. Besides, what's done is done—

ELECTRA. That's very true,
But much that's not done, yet remains to do.
Then let Ægisthus triumph while he may,
Work his own will, and exercise his sway,
Till the gods, pitying this distracted land,
Summon Orestes to arrest his hand.

CLYTEM. Your brother? Sure you've heard the news?
he's dead, so
Will never trouble us

ELECTRA. It has been said so!
Yet cannot I forget a certain oracle——

CLYTEM. Asserting an untruth, for, from his curricl
Which threw him out, a lifeless corse he fell,
Throwing out, o' course, the prophecy as well;
Meantime, what ails you, that you needs must rove,
Despite our orders, to the cypress grove!
Pluck my choice flowers into wreaths to twine,
And spill, while in the wood, our bottled wine?

ELECTRA. 'Twas a libation,

CLYTEM. Yes, but you forget
You took the claret from the cellaret
To waste upon these empty demonstrations,
I've scarcely patience with your scarce libations.

ELECTRA. It was not I—so that reproach may spare it—
Who was the first to tap my father's claret.

Have you no tributes to bestow? I pity you.

CLYTEM. I wish you'd *try boots*, for your shoes don't fit you.

ELECTRA. E'en in my shoes my sympathy's revealed
With him whose soul you sent down unan-*healed*.

CLYTEM. Still the old tune and words!

ELECTRA.

'Twill be the same,

Until Orestes shall his birthright claim,
 Then will I change my note, and sing, I swear,
 A different tune, in fact, the rightful *heir* !
 Now I'll a walk take, this dispute to end,
 And seek the change of air you recommend.

CLYTEM. Was ever queen plagued with a child like this ?

I may say two, for there's Chrysothemis ;
 Henceforth I shall enjoy no peace of mind
 Until I see her marriage contract signed,
 So will for Lycus send, without delay.
 (to ELECTRA) I've no more time to waste on you.

Exit angrily, l.

ELECTRA.

Good day !

And where is he for whom so long I've striven ?
 Would I could be assured he's even living !
 Kind Destiny, his guardian to the last,
 Watch o'er him on *what shore* soever cast,
 And, Fortune, though disaster strive to floor him,
 Rest o'er his arms till you to mine restore him !

Song—Air, " Willie, we have missed you."

Oh ! brother, would I knew, dear,
 Where 'tis you roam ;
 They do not tell me true, dear,
 Who say you'll ne'er come home.
 I'm sure the cruel fate
 Which makes their hearts rejoice
 Can ne'er have overtaken you,
 For there's a still small voice
 Whispering solace to my heart
 To dispel its midnight gloom !
 Orestes, we have missed you,
 Pr'ythee, hasten home.

My dreams are all about you,
 For all the hopes I rear
 Of vengeance, are, without you
 Quite desperate, I fear.
 Patient I wait and watch,
 Cheered by that hope's faint ray
 You'll homeward turn your footsteps
 And wipe my tears away,

For my efforts are in vain
While you delay to come,
Orestes, I have missed you,
Hasten—hasten home!

Exit, R.

SCENE THIRD.—*The sacred Grove of Cypress, through which runs a path supposed to lead to the Tomb of Agamemnon; open country, R.*

Enter ORESTES and PYLADES, L., the former bearing a cinerary urn.

ORESTES. Thus far into the bowels of the land,
A process only miners understand—
Have we marched on. Behind us Argos lies.

PYLAD. To see it one must needs have Argus eyes.

ORESTES. Close here—Mycenæ. (*pointing, R.*)

PYLAD. Then you tread the earth
Once more of the fair land that gave you birth.

ORESTES. True, but I can't much gratitude evince,
I've given it such a wide berth ever since,
Nor would I venture now, but for the rumour
That I am dead—we'll that delusion humour;
Indeed, to make maternal instinct duller,
I'll swear I *died* myself to give it colour.

PYLAD. What! at your own death be the undertaker?
But there's your mother, can you hope to make her
Deaf to the voice of nature?

ORESTES. There's no danger,
For seven years I've play'd the Son and Stranger,
And luckily, this cinerary urn
Supposed my ashes to contain, will turn
Suspicion from my person:—once we've gained
Credence, and footing in the house obtained,
We then may stand at ease, or I shall, rather,
Move one step nearer to remove one step-father,
Who in the downfall of our house will glory,
First floor'd by our one ready-furnish'd story.

PYLAD. But should he doubt the urn, and perhaps begin to
Think it a case that should be well look'd into,
He, our returns will smoke, and truly say
'Tis mere sham dust and not your genuine clay;

The plot's found out by but the cover lifting,
 For yours are ashes that will not bear sifting.
 ORESTES. He'll never *go to see*—how can he, pray,
 While we contrive to keep him at *Urn Bay*.

Song, ORESTES.—Air, “Oft in the Stilly Night.”

Soft if not silly quite
 You must I fear have found me,
 If you think I can't bring off right
 The troubles that surround me.
 Dispel your fears my boyhood's years
 My manhood will betoken,
 Or that they'll learn aught from the urn
 Which will remain unbroken.
 Soft if not silly, &c.

I shall remember all
 The lies we have link'd together—
 When I recount my fall,
 I doubt most shrewdly whether
 They'll take to task, or think to ask
 The how, or when, or wherefore,
 Quite satisfied that I have died,
 The only fact they care for.
 Soft if not silly, &c.

+ PYLAD. (*looking off, R.*) But who comes here, with votive
 offerings laden?

ORESTES. (*with indifference*) Some pious peasant.

+ PYLAD. No—a glorious maiden!

What dignity and grace in every movement,
 Although her costume might bear some improvement:
 In mien a princess, though apparelled humbly.

+ ORESTES. I see, she's coming—I don't see she's comely.

PYLAD. That taper waist!

+ ORESTES. (*staying him*) Yes—taper's a good name;
 Don't burn your fingers at that taper's flame.

(*becomes interested as he recognizes his sister ELECTRA
 advancing*)

+ Stay! (*clutching the arm of PYLADES*)

+ PYLAD. Hey!

ORESTES. Aye!

PYLAD. Why?

ORESTES. No.

PYLAD. Oh!

ORESTES. It cannot be!

That form! yes—I am not deceived! 'Tis she.

PYLAD. No doubt I shall agree to all you've stated,

If you will take the trouble to translate it.

ORESTES. My sister—yet I mustn't yet embrace her!

PYLAD. I'll act as proxy for you.

ORESTES. I dare say, sir.

If to the good cause loyal she remain

As yet we know not, so, to ascertain

Rehearse our story of the urn, my friend,

And coil a tail about my hapless end;

While I, to make her disposition clear,

Conceal myself, and thus get a *hide-here*.

PYLAD. Sure, with an empty jar you would not mock her?

ORESTES. Not being a *laden* jar it need not shock her!

They retire, L. U. E.

Enter ELECTRA, R. U. E., bearing votive offerings for the tomb.

Symphony—Song, ELECTRA.—Air, "Nothing More."

I've the matter fairly pondered,

And its many pathways seen,

But I scarcely know which road leads

To the vengeance that I mean,

For what can a lonely maiden,

With a task that brimming o'er

With difficulty do, but ask

For her brother, and nothing more?

With no advice to guide me,

I must still go blundering on,

Till I fear the hour for action,

Long arrived will soon be gone.

Let me hear the welcome music

Of his footfall on the floor—

'Tis surely not too much to ask

Only this, and nothing more.

Thus for weeks and months I'm brooding
 O'er hopes too long deferred ;
 Orestes promised to return,
 I know he'll keep his word,
 Could I but see him face to face
 With his worthless pa-in-law—
 That party would like nothing less,
 And I'll ask nothing more.

ELECTRA. (*kneels, c.*) Ye gods who rule the destinies of
 kings,

Look down upon this dreadful state of things !
 If for misdeeds ye retribution purpose,
 Let fall your lightning on these proud usurpers.
 Our country groans, so ruthlessly they bleed her ;
 While the inhabitants, without a leader,
 Stir not to staunch her wounds !—there's not a man
 Will be the spirited *leader of the van* ;
 Though factious eitizens in gloomy knots,
Sit as hens brooding o'er their half-hatched plots ;
 E'en knowing blades with hunger, through the town
 Become sharp set, for taxes grind them down.
 Lycean Phœbus, (*kneels*) make these patriots bolder,
 The rebel fires which in each bosom smoulder,
 Into a blazing conflagration fan,
 And send me, I implore thee !—a young man.

(*observing PYLADES, who approaches, l. c., bearing
 the urn*)

(*aside*) Good looking, too—and I in such confusion !

PYLAD. Pardon this unintentional intrusion,
 Fair lady, and be sure I no offence meant.

(*aside*) That's pretty well, I think, for a commencement,

(*aloud*) I'm to Mycenæ bound, where they expect me.
 But fear I've missed the path—can you direct me ?

ELECTRA. (*pointing, r.*) This spot a plain view of the city
 yields ;

There is a nearer path across the fields,—
 You'll have to ford a brook, through, by that way,
 But if you can't afford, nor brook delay,
 You'll find the distanee will by half be shortened.

PYLAD. Thanks, ma'am, the news I bear is most important,
 From Strophius, King of Phocis.

ELECTRA.

Ha! I presage

The worst news of Orestes in that message;
 Speak—and allay an anxious sister's fears.

PYLAD. Alas, I can but answer with my tears;
 My assistance, like *a cistern*'s full of water!
 But if you be great Agamemnon's daughter,
 You'll mutely bear this new affliction.

ELECTRA.

Who

Can be at once a *mute* and *bearer*, too?

But come, the sad particulars disclose.

PYLAD. 'Tis pity—but I promised, and here goes:

Sings—Air, "The Bold Dragoon."

It was a sad affair that befel that smart young man,—
 Not a maid but stole a glance at him as through the lists
 he ran,

With his harness light and horses bright, and garbed as
 choicest taste equipped 'em,

He took the lead and kept it too, so swiftly round the
 course he whipp'd 'em.

Crack went the lash, ri, tol, &c.

But turning round to take a look what made his rivals lag,
 His horses made a sudden swerve, and touched the turning
 flag;

Then like a rocket from the shock (such cruel grief the
 gods can send us),

He spun up there into the air, and came down a most
 tremendous

Whack on his back, fol lol, &c.

as a sad reverse the most impartial will declare,
 the right heir unto the throne to be thrown right unto
 the air,

But so it was, and all because he would not keep his
 eyes before him,

He fell a corse upon the course, from which home of course
 they bore him,

Back in a sack, fol, lol, &c.

When I from tyrants' menaces to snatch him,
Sent him abroad, for fear they should dispatch him?
And thought a tardy vengeance to enjoy,
Bringing my hopes to anchor round that boy,
Now since harsh fate removes the channel's mark,
All my small craft must founder in the dark.

(*ORESTES rushes to her from his concealment, R. U. E.*)

ORESTES. (C.) Not so, dear sister.

ELECTRA. Pray who are you, sir?

I'd but one brother.

ORESTES. Can't you then infer?

ELECTRA. 'Tis hard, this contradiction as I view it
To reconcile.

ORESTES. I *reckons* I'll soon do it.

ELECTRA. It is—it is'nt! Yet that well known voice.

Yes—no.

ORESTES. You have the privilege of choice.

ELECTRA. Orestes! (*throws herself into his arms*)

ORESTES. Oh, rest easy on that head,

In spite of all this gentleman has said

Upon my word and honour I'm not dead;

But for a further proof my tale is true—

Observe my linen.

ELECTRA. Marked Orestes, too!

ORESTES. Well, never mind the number.

ELECTRA. Oh! my brother.

Even without these proofs 'twere hard to smother

The inward voice that whispers your recovery.

ORESTES. True, 'tis the invoice marks the goods delivery.

ELECTRA. But, why deceive me?

ORESTES. I apologize;

That dust was meant to throw in other eyes,

Though first we tried its influence on you,

To find you, as we reckon'd, staunch and true;

But, since you seem to stand, like strangers ill at ease,

I'll introduce you—there—my sister—Pylades,

Our trusty colleague.

PYLAD. (*to ELECTRA*) Put me to the proof

I'll think no *feat* too great in your behoof.

ORESTES. Now what's the news at home? Have they
been starving you?

You look so ill—and who's this upstart parvenu

So unlike our own Agamemnon ?

ELECTRA.

True.

He's very different from the *Pa ve knew*,
But I must own, although they treat me vilely
From morn to night I'm *rated very highly*,
While prying eyes all secresy deny us,
Making the court a court of *nice eye pry us*.

ORESTES. Let vengeance which has *long lain* dormant, burn in
My breast! Its a *long lane* that has no turning.
So now *en route* and forward as we trudge it,
You can unfold the rest of the home budget.

(*a bugle sounds distant, L. U. E.*)

ELECTRA. A horn! the hunting party! I doubt whether
It will be prudent we be seen together.

ORESTES. You're right—if to the palaece you precede us,
We will be up and doing when you need us.

Exit ELECTRA, R.

(ORESTES and PYLADES retire a little, R., looking
after ELECTRA—ÆGISTHUS enters, L. U. E., through
the thicket—he is habited in the costume of the
chase, torn, wet and dirty—he sounds a horn)

ÆGIST. Amid those branches I have lost my route,
I play a trump, but no one follows suit!

ORESTES. (*advancing, R.*) May we enquire, sir, what dis-
aster's fretting you?

ÆGIST. (C.) Oh, gentlemen, I've lost my way, my horse,
my retinue!

(*sounds horn*) In vain I blow—the birds, with echoing
throats

Alone will take up my dishonoured notes.

PYLAD. (L.) Birds? Fast men blow the post-horn for a *lark*!

ÆGIST. That is a *horni-tho'-logical* remark,

But don't apply to my case, for in me

You an unhappy hunting party see.

"A southerly wind and cloudy sky proclaim

A hunting morning"—and so, out we came:

We reached the park—the hounds *threw off*, of course.

A movement which was followed by my horse.

ORESTES. You were unhorsed!

ÆGIST.

The animal was vicious;

Indeed, the whole day has been *unhorse-spicious*!

On flew the hounds, and yelping through the park,
Left me a *tarrier*—with a loss of *bark*.

I, while the others kept their seats in clover,
Was such a *green* that I was *grazed all over*.

PYLAD. They left you in the slough of despond here?

ÆGIS. Worse—it was in the slough of that pond there;
A situation I did not desire—

You see there's no occasion to *add-mire*!

(*turns round and shows himself covered with mud*)

Galled by the saddle, sadly I remained
In water, that was not—as I was—*strained*.

Fearing a ditch additional to meet,
Where I might my *Graze Elegy* repeat;

Till finding mine a sinking situation,
Like a great man, I rose with the occasion,
Went wandering on amid these tangled trees,
Until I thought *wanders* would never cease!

PYLAD. If you're *fat-igued*, on us you'd better *lean*.

ORESTES. We'll be your guides, though doubtless when
you're seen

By the street boys, you'll find you're guyed enough;
For they'll provide the *stares*—and show you up.

ÆGIST. Thanks, friends; but first your names I fain
would learn.

ORESTES. You'll give us your address, sir, in return?

ÆGIST. Of course—my costume so to seed has run,
I'd gladly change address with any one.

Trio.—ÆGISTHUS, ORESTES, and PYLADES.

Air—Laughing Trio—"Rose of Castile."

ÆGIST. I am the king, ha! ha! who got a fling, ha! ha!
Over a thing, ha! ha! they call a Ha! Ha!

PYLAD. He is the king, ha! ha!

ORESTES. 'Tis an odd thing, ha! ha! fate should thus
bring, ha! ha! us together, ha! ha! ha! ha!

ÆGIST. While here we must amuse you, ha! ha! to the
queen to introduce you, ha! ha! I shall be
proud, ha! ha! if I'm allowed, Ha! ha!
which I much doubt, ha! ha! *entres nous*,
but, ha! ha!

PYLAD. } We shall be proud, ha! ha! if honoured so
 ORESTES } far, ha! ha!
 } But, sire, this condescension.
 ÆGIST. Ha! ha! the matter pray don't mention.
 PYLAD. { If he's your new papa, fate lends her aid so far.
 ORESTES { If he's my new papa, fate lends her aid so far.
 ÆGIST. { Home you must come, ha! ha! you and your
 } ehum, ha! ha!
 ORESTES { I need not go far for vengeance, ha! ha!
 PYLAD. { You need not go far for vengeance, ha! ha!
 ÆGIST. { She may look glum, ha! ha! no matter, ha! ha!
Exit ÆGISTHUS, supported by ORESTES and
PYLADES, R. U. E.

SCENE FOURTH.—*The Curtained Gallery.*

Enter CHRYSOTHEMIS, R.

CHRYSO. Orestes is returned! What joy! Yet he
 May long ere this have quite forgotten me!
 Does he still wear my portrait next his heart
 With which he promised he would never part?
 "Give me," said he, "your miniature, I pray,
 To look on every *minute* you're away."
 But did he *mean it sure*? or was the intent
 Naught better than an empty compliment;
 One of those bubbles men with soft soap blow
 To please a woman's faney, who, below,
 Delighted sees the fairy globe mount higher,
 Then like a dream, break, vanish, and expire?
 Nay, I'll not think it—'twill not do to be
 So hard on one who was so soft on me.
 Here comes my aunt, and Lyeus in her train,
 To try his second-hand suit on again;—
 'Twas but this morn she for my coldness chid me;
 I wish he'd run away with aunt, and rid me
 Of both at once; but 'tis too much to hope
 To merge the two bores in one *aunt elope!* *Exit, R.*

*Enter CLYTEMNESTRA with LYCUS, who appears anxious
 to escape, L.*

CLYTEM. Come in! What do you fear?

LYCUS.

'Twas but this morn

That she turned up her nose at me in scorn,
 And though she didn't in plain terms refuse, she
 Distinctly meant nay by her *ney-retrousseé* ;
 While, singular but sympathetic fact,
My nose became disjointed by the act ;
 When love's in question, as you may suppose,
 The man's ears aint soothed by the lady's noes,
 So please, I'll call again this day six months.

(going, L.)

CLYTEM. No—if 'tis done, it must be done at once ;
 I'll send her to you, and remember " Faint
 Heart ne'er, &c."—in bright colors paint
 The joys that to a wedded life belong.

LYCUS. I can't paint well, but I can pitch it strong.

CLYTEM. Wait while of your arrival I inform her ;
 And should she still continue cold, I'll warm her.

Exit, R.

LYCUS. I'll to the sticking place my courage screw,
 And brace my nerves up for the interview. *(sings)*

Air, " Would she but name the day,"—" Satanella."

Oh, would she but name the day,
 Or let me mention it for her ;
 If she would only say,
 Sweetheart, I am yours to-morrow !
 Why does she floor me so ;
 Vex me with long delay ;
 Leave me to sigh, heigho !
 Why can't she name the day ?

Re-enter CHRYSOthemis, R.

CHRYSO. What's happened ? Dear sir, are you in much
 pain ?

You've over-reached yourself, I fear, to gain
 A high note, and are suffering from the *strain* ;
 Still in my ears that piteous wail is ringing.

LYCUS. *(offended)* What you call piteous wailing, I call
 singing.

And there are many, tho' I may do badly,
 Who'd give their ears to sing as well, miss, gladly !

CHRYSO. Their ears! that sacrifice would not much
cost them,

They'd like your music better when they'd lost them.

LYCUS. Oh, why thus jeer a heart's pure fond desire?

You know 'tis dangerous to play with fire.

CHRYSO. This morn I threw cold water on your suit,
Enough to deluge you from head to foot,
And put out every spark you else might nurture,
Unless your suit were made of gutta percha.

LYCUS. Put me to any water proof you will,
So I *get a perch* here in your heart still.

CHRYSO. You've had your answer, why thus persevere?
If some one I could name were only here;
And saw you tease me, he'd occasion seize
To right me properly and *cross your tease*.
If he the down-strokes of his round hand tries——

LYCUS. (*interrupting*) He'd cross my tease by dotting
both my eyes:

I understand—a system taught by *Smart*.

And who's this happy sharer of your heart?

CHRYSO. (*aside*) How foolish! his suspicion I've incurred.
(*aloud*) 'Tis nobody.

LYCUS. (*incredulously*) Nobody? On my word,
I wish that I were nobody.

CHRYSO. Ne'er fear, it
May come in time, you are so *very near it*.

LYCUS. Madam! But, I'll my indignation swallow
Though it should choke me.

CHRYSO. Nay, that doesn't follow;
Your indignation has so little menace in't,
You couldn't swallow anything more innocent.
(*goes up and crosses, L.*)

Enter CLYTEMNESTRA, R.

CLYTEM. Well, is it settled?

LYCUS. (*advancing despondingly, R.*) Yes; I think it's
settled.

Your majesty, the belle is too high mettled
To chime in, as she's *told* with anything,
Although she seems quite *clear* about the *ring*.

CLYTEM. (*crosses to CHRYSOthemis*) Why how's this? do you dare dispute my will?

CHRYSO. No, aunt, if you'll, by way of codicil,
Let me choose whom I like and whom refuse.

CLYTEM. Well, but time presses and we've none to lose;
To keep relations friendly I but see
In this mate here material guarantee.

CHRYSO. Your kindly project I've no wish to baffle,
Hadn't you better put me up to raffle?
A prize to wrestle for. (*aside*) A good idea,
'Twill make the intentions of Orestes clear.

CLYTEM. (c.) Agreed—and to make sure the contest's fair
To all, it shall be done upon the square,
The public square, I mean, amid the games.

CHRYSO. (L.) If none appear to urge his prior claims,
I'll make my mind up to the worst,—that's you,
(*to LYCUS*)

Or any one, in short, I don't care who.

LYCUS. (R.) Excuse me, madam, wrestling is an art
Which of my youthful studies formed no part,
Besides I'm delicate about the shins,
And not so firm as might be on my pins,
While shoes that pinch me, prudently admonish
That I am for a wrestler much too *Cornish*.

CLYTEM. (*to him*) You run no risk, for, without my permission

No one will dare appear in opposition.

LYCUS. (*valiantly*) Under those circumstances I'll away
And brace my sinews for the manly fray.

Exit, R. 2 E.

*Enter ÆGISTHUS dressed as in Scene I., with PYLADES
bearing the urn, L.*

ÆGIST. (*timidly*) My dear, may I make bold to introduce
An interesting stranger?

CLYTEM. (*aside to him*) What's the use
Of bringing home, to make our larder thinner
Guests, when I'm not prepared to stand a dinner,
E'en on the cheap plan that the Times would bring
In vogue?

ÆGIST. (*aside to her*) He's good news.

CLYTEM. (*aside to him*) That's another thing.

ÆGIST. (*hypocritically*) Mentions your poor boy's death.

CLYTEM. (*aside*) Then every dish

Is his, if only the desert I wish

Has fallen on Orestes! (*to PYLADES*) Sir, you're welcome—

My niece—(*introduces him to CHRYSOTHEMIS*)

You have some piteous news to tell? Come

I know its purport, out with it, don't spare it,

Besides I am strong-minded, and can bear it.

+ PYLAD. (*crosses to CHRYSOTHEMIS*) To coil it up then, in the smallest space,

Your son was entered for a chariot race.

The goal is near—a pillar intervenes,

Smashing the chariot all to smithereens!

ÆGIST. I see—he shaved the post too closely, where

Too close a shave *cut off his father's heir!*

CLYTEM. Excuse a mother's feelings—the essentials

You've mentioned—may I ask for your credentials?

PYLAD. That Death the 'graver has *struck off the prince*
This proof before all letters will convince.

(*shewing the urn*)

(*aside to CHRYSOTHEMIS*) Be satisfied—Orestes is not far.

CLYTEM. To a mother's feelings this is a *sad jar*.

Remove the mournful evidence, I pray,

(*to LADY, who exits with urn, L.*)

I've no time to cry over it to-day.

The games require our presence.

(*all move, L., as if going off*)

Enter ELECTRA, R., she is handsomely dressed—her hair neatly arranged, and her manner joyous.

ELECTRA.

What, mamma!

Going without me?

CLYTEM. (*astonished*) Why, how changed you are!

This, for the ill-conditioned sloven miss

An unexpected metamorphose is.

ÆGIST. True, dear—I, under favour be it said,

Ne'er met a more fast metamorphosed maid!

I fear I must be wandering in my mind.

CLYTEM. You'll not stray far—the space is too confined.

(*to ELECTRA*) Why, you are quite finely tricked out!

ELECTRA. (*aside*) Yes, and you
Will soon find you are *finely tricked out* too!

CHRYSO. That flush of pleasure and joy-lighted eye,
Explain and say, my pretty coy—'cos why?

CLYTEM. My daughter, sir. (*introduces ELECTRA to PYLADES*)

■ PYLAD. (*to ELECTRA, crossing to her*) Lady, I kiss your hand.
(*KING and LYCUS talk together*)

CHRYSO. (*aside, watching them*) He does it too! Ah, now
I understand

Her change of dress—'tis easy to infer,
These happy tidings must have *tidy-ed* her.
With that young man too she's in love, I see,
Which to those well oiled locks supplies the key.

ÆGIS. Let us sad thoughts of past times chase away,
And mingle with the pastimes of to-day.
While that we have no false pride to attest,
Chrysothemis shall foot it with the rest.

Quintette—ÆGISTHUS, CLYTEMNESTRA, ELECTRA, PYLADES,
CHRYSOTHEMIS,—*Air, "Girl, I left behind me."*

ÆGIST. The sports begun—let's see the fun,
Front places are bespoken;
What sight is there that can compare
With seeing heads well broken?

CLYTEM. Young Lycus waits to lead the fêtes,
Then let's be off to find him;
Twill cheer his eyes to see his prize—
The girl he left behind him!

ÆGIST. }
CLYTEM. } Young Lycus, &c.

ELECTRA. } I hope his pate may meet the fate
CHRYSO. } To which our prayers consigned him,
Before he tried to win as bride,
The girl he left behind him.

Exeunt, L.

SCENE FIFTH.—*The Great Square of the City during the Fête.*

The Stage is crowded with PEOPLE engaged in various pursuits—Some are looking at the exhibition of a classical

"Punch and Judy," R. C. ; some are endeavouring to obtain a leg of mutton from the head of a greasy pole, C. ; others are engaged witnessing the performance of a Strolling Company of ACTORS on a Thespian cart, L. ; Two PLAYERS engaged in a contest, their partizans looking on encouraging them, R. The Scene opens to

A BALLET DIVERTISSEMENT !

Enter PHILARIO, R. U. E.

PHILAR. (*pompously*) Their majesties approach ! and bid me say,

They give you leave for this once to display
The loyalty which fills your hearts, no doubt,
In one prolonged enthusiastie shout !

(*murmurs among the crowd*)

You seem inclined to take your time, I see ;
Perhaps you'd better take your time from me.
Now, hip—hip--hip—Hurrah !

(*the PEOPLE groan*)

I was to add, if anybody feel
A diffidence in answering this appeal
With heart and voice, 'tis possible, instead,
That gentleman will answer with his head.
Take my advice, then, or you may repent it,
Immediately be joyous and contented ;
Let your enthusiasm over bile,
And mind you smile as you were wont to smile !

Grand March—Enter THE ROYAL PARTY, ÆGISTHUS, CLYTEMNESTRA, LYCUS in the costume of an Athlete, with a cloak thrown over him ; CHRYSOTHEMIS, ELECTRA, and PYLADES enter R. U. E, and come down to L. At the instigation of PHILARIO some of the PEOPLE faintly say, "Hurrah," in desponding unjoyous tones.

ÆGIST. Thanks, friends, this genuine unbought applause
Speaks volumes for the wisdom of our laws !

(*cries of "Oh ! oh !"*)

ÆGIST. (*fiercely*) Whoever "oh's" will find he has to pay !
(*mildly*) I did not catch that last remark.

PEOPLE. (*faintly as before*)

Hooray !

ÆGIST. (*with feigned emotion*) Yes, these spontaneous
outbursts of affection
Are pleasant matter for a king's reflection.
Pshaw! this is weakness!

(*brushes away an imaginary tear*)

Doubtless you all know
We are about our fair niece to bestow
On the best wrestler, who, you'll understand,
Must carry off the palm to win her hand;—
But that you may all learn the stakes imperilled,
We publish full particulars in the Herald.

A HERALD *advances, c., while a roped arena is formed round him.*

HERALD. Oh, yes! oh, yes! which means, oh, know
you all

'Tis my vocation to the lists to call
Whoever ventures to pick up the glove
Thrown down by Lycus for his lady love!
Lycus, the Argos Gilliflower famous.

LYCUS (*aside to CLYTEM.*) Oh, dear! should any not an
ignoramus

Appear, I'm floored!

CLYTEM. (*aside to him*) On that head have no fear,
Against my champion none will dare appear;
Keep up your spirits.

LYCUS. (*re-assured*) Thanks—on that condition
My pecker holds its usual high position.

HERALD. Three times I sound my trumpet! (*sounds—a pause*)

No reply?

(LYCUS *throws off his cloak and advances boastfully*)

LYCUS. When once I stripped, I thought they would
be shy!

Manner and style like mine not many men
Possess!—perhaps you'd better sound again.
They're much *too deep* for soundings, and they may
Take it as *sound* advice to keep away.

(HERALD *sounds*)

CHRYSO. (*to ELECTRA aside*) With dread forebodings my
sad mind oppressed is:

Alas! my only hope was in Orestes.
 Why did I to this silly wager yield,
 In full assurance he would take the field?
 But he deserts me——

ELECTRA. (*aside to her*) Fye, you mustn't say so;
 All is not lost yet—prythee, don't give way so.

CHRYSO. And must I be that empty coxeomb's bride?

ELECTRA. You shan't be tied to him whate'er be-tide:
 Let me entreat you to be pacified?

CHRYSO. Be pacified? The troubles that arise,
 Could ne'er have come to *pass-if-I'd* been wise.

HERALD. None enters an appearance, sir;—all mute.

LYCUS. Then mine will be an undefended suit.

Wake all the town, and let the people know it
 Is the last time of asking. Go it—blow it!

(HERALD *sounds*)

CHRYSO. (*aside*) That last blow is a last blow to my hopes.

ÆGIS. No one will venture then within the ropes?

ORESTES *enters hurriedly, L. U. E., and makes his way
 through the CROWD.*

ORESTES. I will, sire, if it's all the same to you.

CHRYSO. (*to ELECTRA*) 'Tis he! 'Tis he!

ELECTRA. (*to her*) Hush! List to my imploring,
 Two more such 'Tis he's will make up our *floorin'.*

CLYTEM. (*aside*) 'Tis well! it matters little to my plan,
 So she *be* married, *who's* the happy man.

ORESTES. (*to CHRYSOTHEMIS*) How could you think I
 would forsake you, dear,

When 'tis for sake of you that I am here?

There is my gage, although I risk, I know,

A *par-a-dise* upon a single throw!

LYCUS. (*aside*) How very awkward! (*to ORESTES with
 assumed superiority*) Are you used to falling?

ORESTES. Wrestling with fate long time has been my
 ealling

And in my college days I learned the charms

Of a good long pull at the Wrestler's Arms.

ÆGIS. We'll put you to the proof; so, clear the ring,

And let them *trip* each other's *heel and fling.*

You shall try but one fall.

LYCUS.

Be that agreed.

ORESTES. Now when you're ready——

Song.—Air, "Come into the garden, Maud."

Come into the ring, my lord,
 Since down your gage is thrown;
 Come into the ring, my lord,
 Though I'm not in fit state I'll own—
 In condition first-rate I'll own.
 But your wordy challenge is wafted abroad,
 And the trumpet defiance has blown,
 For our breeze of this morning proves,
 And the plan it our love it will try,
 'Twere sinning to faint in her sight whom one loves,
 Or instead—like a duffer—fight shy.
 It aint in the light of a man she loves,
 She'll look on whoever says die.

Come into the ring, my lord,
 Since down your gage is thrown;
 One of us will soon be floored,
 And the lady the victor's own!

(they wrestle—LYCUS is thrown—shout)

ONE OF THE CROWD.

Well thrown, indeed.

(All the CROWD, "Hoo——!"—they are going to shout, but are stopped by the KING)

ORESTES. How do you feel?—I'm not warm at all.

So if you'd like to try another fall,

We'll go "best out of three."

LYCUS. *(rising)*

You're very kind.

To come off second-best out of one, I find

Is quite enough to put me out of breath,

Best out of three to me were sudden death!

*(goes up to QUEEN—BOYS take up ring)*ÆGIST. *(rising and coming down, R., to ORESTES)* Since

then your match her match with Lycus breaks,

(crossing to her) I can't do less than offer you the stakes.*(presenting CHRYSOTHEMIS—ORESTES crosses leaving KING, R.)*

ORESTES. An offer that's so handsome on its face
I need, sire, no caressing to embrace.

CLYTEM. (*aside*) The girl's at last disposed of—that's a
blessing!

(*embracing* CHRYSOTHEMIS)
(*coming down, R. of KING—LYCUS, R. corner*)
(*aloud*) Since the engagement seems so very *pressing*,
We'll set at once about the preparations;
Meantime accept my best congratulations.

ELECTRA. And mine.

LYCUS. And mine—for I don't see the fun
Of breaking several ribs in gaining one.
I pitched upon my head——

ÆGIST. That's no hard case,
You couldn't pitch upon a softer place.
Stay! we must know the title of the winner.

ORESTES. You shall be satisfied, sire, after dinner.

ÆGIST. On to the banquet then, and after all
Your yarn is spun, we'll wind up in a ball!

March.—Exeunt ÆGISTHUS, &c., &c. R. U. E.—*shouts*
and resumption of the music, and the Scene closes
as the PEOPLE go up the stage.

SCENE SIXTH.—*Ante-chamber in the Palace.*

Enter NEMESIS, c.

NEMESIS. So far, so well; but much is yet to do.
I really cannot tell if all of you
Recall the old Greek rule of stage propriety—
Which was—the audience having had satiety
Of crime displayed and vengeance on it willed;
Upon the stage the actors were *not* killed,
But by some fanciful poetic means
Were decently disposed of—off the scenes!
Let none think we the grand old works despise,
Which for your modern eyes we modernize;
Since old Mycenæ then, my scenic art
Displays—though you'll not find my scene a cart
As in those days—we'll not in this depart
From the old rule. So, though the guilty wife
And husband both are doomed to end their life

By changing poisoned cups, we'll leave the fumes
 To work upon them in their dressing rooms
 Behind the curtain. You'll enquire no doubt
 How this catastrophe is brought about.
 Learn then the queen has fixed her admiration
 On Pylades, who, at my instigation,
 Appears to listen to her overtures,
 (While poor Electra all the pangs endures
 Of Jealousy). Whereat, the queen her mind up
 Has made, her former partnership to wind up—
 Will dose the king's cup—the mode well she knows it,
 For, in her case, *experienta dose it*.
 Meantime, here comes the interesting victim,
 Looking as though some sense of wrong had pricked
 him.

To meditate revenge. Of both I'll spoil,
 The future hopes, while, from this mortal coil
 Both simultaneously slip their cables,
 And each on each with your leaves turn the tables.
 (NEMESIS retires up the stage)

Enter ÆGISTHUS, R.

ÆGIST. This cat-and-dog life can't go on much longer,
 The cat has proved so very much the stronger.
 Would that we lived in times some yet may see,
 When married folks can separated be.
 I could prove cruelty 'mongst other wee sins,
 And sue for a divorce, for *divorce* reasons.
 Meantime, some means I must use to get rid o' her
 And start again in life a jolly widower—
 Make up to—whom? Aye! there's the rub!

NEMESIS. (*unseen by him, suggests*) Chrysothemis.

ÆGIST. Chrysothemis? Why not? the notion's not amiss,
 But there's a proverb not more trite than true,
 Which treats about the old love and the new.
 First, of the first dispose, I'll fix my choice on
 A second—humph! what means to use though?

NEMESIS. (*as before*) Poison.

Exit NEMESIS, L. 2 E.

ÆGIST. A good idea; yes, nothing can be clearer,
 I'll drug her cup—South Attican Madeira—

'Tis fit for such a purpose I should choose
 A wine that has no *character* to lose.
 If she but take that draught, I am content
 'Twill prove the rough draught of her *settlement*.

Sings—Air, “ Jolly Nose.”

'Neath her nose—'neath her nose !
 'Neath her nose at the banquet I'll manage to slip
 A cup of South Attic Madeira,
 With which if she ventures to moisten her lip,
 She will not find her intellect clearer.
 Where it grows—I suppose
 Salt and senna may glow in the glass,
 And rhubarb may crown the refection
 So if but one drop to her palate may pass,
 Though I scarcely conceive my fond wife such an ass,
 She must pay for her strange predilection.
 'Neath the rose—off she goes,
 Without the least fear of detection !

Exit, L.

Enter ELECTRA, R.

ELECTRA. A warning this to all unmarried maidens is
 Who list to Cupid's too seductive cadences,
 That fickle, perjured Pylades who swore to me
 Such oaths as never mortal swore before to me,
 Is flirting with the queen in the back garden !

Enter NEMESIS, L. 2 E.

NEMESIS. Be comforted, my child.

ELECTRA. (*astonished*) I beg your pardon.

Are you aware, ma'am, these are private premises ?

NEMESIS. No gates are strong enough to keep out Nemesis,
 But to resume—your lover true remains,
 'Tis but at my will he a passion feigns
 For her.

ELECTRA. Can this be true ? or am I dreaming ?

NEMESIS. This *new suit* that you dread's made up of
seeming,
 When the work's done which I in hand have ta'en,
 The seeming shall come all unstitched again.

Duet.—ELECTRA AND NEMESIS—*Air*, “*Cheer up Sam.*”

The sword of Fate suspended
 By justice over crime,
 Waits only for my signal
 To fall—and now the time
 Approaches—though deferred
 The long account to close,
 And give you at a word,
 A triumph o’er your foes.
 Cheer up, then,
 For to-day, ’ere the sun has gone down,
 For the past shall atone,
 And you will own
 You’ve more cause to smile than to frown.

ELECTRA. (*repeat*) I’ll cheer up, ma’am,
 And won’t let my spirits go down,
 For the kindness you’ve shown
 I’ll freely own, &c.

Exeunt severally.

SCENE SEVEN.—*Grand Banquet Hall in the Palace—*
GUESTS seated at tables, which line the stage on either
side—ÆGISTHUS and CLYTEMNESTRA at a table on centre
trap—ORESTES and CHRYSOTHEMIS at extremity of table,
R.—PYLADES, ELECTRA, and LYCUS, L.—Music.

ÆGIST. (*rising*) My friends, although of speeches from
 the throne

There are but few that kings can call their own,
 By ministers contributed each particle,
 I beg to say, mine is a genuine article:
 The toast I now propose with loud acclaim,

(*points to ORESTES and PYLADES*)

Is the illustrious visitors who came
 So lately to our Court,—drink we with zest
 These two last copies of the Welcome Guest!

(*they rise to drink the health*)

(*aside*) She's left her goblet in my reach—that's capital!

Hey, presto, pass!

(*he exchanges his goblet for the QUEEN'S, as he fancies, unobserved by her*)

CLYTEM. (*aside*) He's ta'en mine—ere he lap it all
Another sovereign on the cypress mount
Is carried forward to his long account.

ÆGIST. Bumpers! (*aside*) Dear me, I fear there's something
wrong,

This wine's so inconveniently strong;
One stoop's enough to make one stupid, quite.

CLYTEM. (*aside*) There is a taste in this that don't seem
right.

(*cheers from all the GUESTS—ORESTES rises to respond*)

ORESTES. My friends, I thank you, and attention claim

While, as I promised, I divulge my name;

Learn, my parental tree can boast a stem none

Inferior to that of Agamemnon. (*sensation*)

Concerning whom I could a tale unfold,

Whose lightest word would make your blood run cold,

And while it might your very breath suspend,

Makes me his particular heir to stand on end.

Hence your guest's name, as you've already guessed, is
Orestes, and your king.

ALL.

Long live Orestes!

(*the King and Queen are yielding to the narcotic influence of the potions*)

CLYTEM. (*dreamily*) Of all this tumult, what can be the
reason?

ÆGIST. It looks to me uncommonly like treason.

CLYTEM. My son!

ORESTES. (*advancing*) Ah! that reminds me—now I'm
warm;

I've an unpleasant duty to perform,

Imposed by fate. (*draws*)

ÆGIST. Oh! spare yourself, my boy,

Ten minutes since—I mention it with joy,

My poisoned cup was drank from by your mother!

CLYTEM. I've but one consolation—you've another!

For, of *yours*, let me tell you every drop's
At least as deadly as cheap lollypops!

ÆGIST. As many a victim, who, insanely willing
To have his likeness taken for a shilling,
Finds himself nothing like himself—so surely
I find, like him, I'm *taken very poorly*;
Both our cups drugg'd! It seems then I and you
Are both floored, and laid down with *drug-it* too!

CHRYSO. Though I don't dote on aunty much, I vote
We do our best to get an *anti-dote*!

NEMESIS *rises, c.*

NEMESIS. Stir not! their time has come—leave them to me,
And let the Fates work out their own decree.
To you, Orestes, as of right belongs,
(You the young martyr of a thousand wrongs,)
Mycenæ's throne, and on it, by your side
Chrysothemis shall sit, your well-won bride.
(*to ELECTRA*) For you, whom snow, nor rain, nor
taunt, nor gibe,
Could drive from duty's path, I'll now prescribe
Henceforth you'll shun those dangerous night draughts
please,
To take, if I may say it, your *pill-at-ease*,
Resting in pillowed ease with Pylades.

ÆGIST. (*raising his head*) I beg on this felicitous occasion,
To make the customary observation,
Bless you, my children! (*to NEMESIS*) Thank you,
ma'am, good-day.
(*to CLYTEMNESTRA*) My dear, I think our carriage
stops the way.

(ÆGISTHUS and CLYTEMNESTRA, *with table, sink*
on c. trap)

NEMESIS. Justice is done upon the guilty pair,
Yet, lest pollution hover in the air,
Tainting your future lives, these blood-stained halls,
Crime-clouded towers, and time-dishonored walls,
None here in their destruction to involve,
Must as a Polytechnic view, dissolve,

And like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Leave not a track to mark their old position!

(NEMESIS waves her arm—the tables sink, and
Scene breaks to pieces, or dissolves, revealing the
last Scene)

Finale.—Air, "Power of Love."

You're a power whose sway
The authors must adore,
Bidding them decay
Or live a little more ;
For in your verdict lies
The hope he has reared above
All others—or—he dies,
Such is your power of glove.

Source of joy and woe,
Sealers of his fate,
Don't let him vanquished go,
Or quite repudiate.
Oh, who has known you well,
As vulture less than dove,
None can better tell
Than he, your power of glove.

NEMESIS. CHRYSO. OREST. ELECTRA. PYLADES. LYCUS.

Curtain.

